

MONO COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

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MINUTES MARCH 9, 2006 (Adopted April 6, 2006)

Commissioners present: Ron Black, Scott Bush, Rick Kattelman, Sally Miller, Steve Shipley.

Staff present: Scott Burns, CDD director; Keith Hartstrom & Larry Johnston, principal planners; Evan Nikirk & Tom Waters, public works; Dennis Lampson, environmental health; Mark Magit, assistant county counsel; Stacey Simon, deputy county counsel; C.D. Ritter, commission secretary.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Rick Kattelman called the meeting to order at 10:12 a.m.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT: No items.

3. MEETING MINUTES: Review and adopt minutes of February 9, 2006.

MOTION: Adopt minutes of February 9, 2006. Amend: Item 7, third paragraph: "... but conservation easements are more permanent. Easements, however, *potentially can* pull property out of the county tax base." (Miller/Black. Ayes: 4. Abstain due to absence: Shipley.)

4. CONSENT AGENDA: PARCEL MAP 37-172/Steel

Evan Nikirk confirmed that all map conditions have been satisfied. A subdivision improvement agreement, zone of benefit, and offers of dedication will go to the Mono Supervisors on March 21.

MOTION: Authorize the chair's signature on Parcel Map 37-172, indicating approval. Bush/Black. Ayes: 5.)

5. REPORTS:

A. DIRECTOR:

1) The County has implemented Development Impact Fees on new units only, about \$2,700/unit south of Conway Summit, with an extra \$400 in Crowley Lake and \$2,300 in June Lake. The Mono Basin RPAC requested exclusion from the fees, but a consultant indicated that being part of the south county would be to its benefit. Eventually the Mono Supervisors will extend DIF northward. Mono County is negotiating to levy fees within Mammoth Lakes to fund capital improvements such as a jail and office space. County fees are less than 10% of Mammoth's fees.

2) An update on RPAC progress was presented to the Mono Supervisors. The original RPAC, June Lake Citizens Advisory Committee, has existed 20 years. The RPACs have been delegated the authority to advise on capital facilities. Juvenile detention will be mentioned to the consultant.

3) Intrawest is for sale, but it's unclear how that impacts Mono County. Water studies are under way at the Rodeo Grounds.

4) White Mountain Estates, several miles away from Chalfant, has units concentrated on half-acre lots, matching the existing development pattern. Extra outreach with the fire district will be conducted. Timeline: Administrative draft of the EIR, public draft in month or two, 45-day review, response to comments, and then to Planning Commission. A zone of benefit for water provision could be administered through the Department of Public Works.

B. PLANNING COMMISSIONERS: Commissioner Miller met with Rusty Gregory re June Mountain and urged him to get people to work together to avoid strife, lawsuits, etc. Commissioner Black reported the intent to cut back June Mountain from daily to four days/wk has shocked the

DISTRICT #1	DISTRICT #2	DISTRICT #3	DISTRICT #4	DISTRICT #5
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community, especially business owners. A major concern was Intrawest's original plan for 90' buildings. About 125 people attended the CAC meeting, concerned primarily about losing jobs, shutting down lodges and restaurants, closing businesses, and impacting other communities. CEO Rusty Gregory showed up unannounced and answered questions. He indicated a loss of TOT means a bed base increase is needed. If four days/wk does not succeed, the land would be returned to the USFS. Commissioner Kattelmann quoted a Paramount Mine article that said millions of dollars could come to Mono County, but BLM did not confirm this. Federal permits and a reclamation ordinance would be required.

6. INFORMATION: No items.

7. PUBLIC HEARING:

MOUNTAIN VISTAS SPECIFIC PLAN/EIR/Tract Map 37-54/Mize. General Plan Amendment 03-02 redesignates APN 26-210-37 from Estate Residential to Specific Plan (including Single-Family Residence, Commercial, Utility, Open Space and SFR Equestrian). The General Plan Amendment will also amend the following policy in the Mono County Land Use Element, Tri-Valley Policies, Objective B, Action 2.1 to read: Gross densities for residential development in Chalfant shall not exceed one dwelling unit per acre unless a Specific Plan and Environmental Impact Report are prepared for the proposed project, an on-site water system is included in the design for the proposed project, residential densities for the proposed project should not exceed one-half acre gross density, and the project site is located within or adjacent to the existing community of Chalfant with frontage on U.S. Hwy. 6. The Specific Plan initially proposed 47 single-family residences, a site for future small-scale commercial development, and associated infrastructure and utilities on a 28.95-acre parcel at the northwest corner of U.S. Hwy. 6 and Chalfant Road. The revised tract map reduces the number of residential lots from 47 to 39. An Environmental Impact Report has been prepared. *Staff: Keith Hartstrom*

Keith Hartstrom cited changes to the revised map at the Mono Supervisors workshop Feb. 21: different mix of residential lots up to one acre, reduction in number of lots from 47 to 39, 30' space between buildings, 20' noncombustible area along west boundary, and two more streetlights. The Chalfant fire district has asked a consultant to review the plan.

Burns cited concerns about precedence. Additional language in the General Plan Amendment will truly isolate just this property. Water resources are addressed in the Planning Commission resolution. Commissioner Kattelmann asked if streetlights exist now (yes, three) and whether the community wants more lighting.

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING: Supervisor Hap Hazard represented the concerns of Chalfant residents who could not attend: 1) No additional or minimal lighting, although the FPD wants it; 2) Positions on the one acre vs. half acre issue: support for the project and half-acre parcels (40%-50%); "We moved here, and want rural atmosphere and one-acre parcels -- nothing else is acceptable"; and a petition with 150 signatures opposing half-acre parcels. Half-acre parcels on the east side of Hwy. 6 have experienced water contamination, and larger lots could reduce that potential; 3) Water consumption and septic issues; and 4) Finding the best use of that land for development. Some education is occurring, and the concern about half-acre lots is lessening. One-acre parcels + second units would total 168 units. Secondary housing has evolved since the Specific Plan was devised.

Andy Holmes of Triad/Holmes Associates said Mize has gone the extra mile with this project, farther than any other developer. The single biggest example is the "S" curve. A consultant indicated no need for alignment, yet Mize agreed to it at significant cost. The project went from 47 lots to 39, a major concession. He has met almost all concerns. It's a solid project, and Mize hopes for support from the commission and later the Mono Supervisors. **CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING.**

DISCUSSION: Commissioner Shipley described the project as well done with character, no big row of houses. Water issues are addressed by a community water system. There has been a ton of compromise, and the project is about as mitigated as it can be. Out in vast open land, half-acre and one acre do not differ in visual impact. Mize has made a valiant effort to develop a good project for the future. The area should benefit greatly from increased property values and services.

Commissioner Black applauded Supervisor Hazard for walking through the process, and for making a decision at the end. Mize has jumped through lots of hoops, and staff has done a good job.

Commissioner Bush still had reservations. The extra cost could have been avoided by setting up one-acre parcels like the Ranches at Osage Circle. He still supported one-acre minimums.

Commissioner Miller said Mize has addressed community concerns and commended him on making a better project. Regarding one-acre parcels: Make the GPA specific to that parcel to alleviate concerns about water and setting precedent. The opposition can't lock the door and throw away the key. It's still private property, and the project is needed for housing stock.

Commissioner Kattelman supported the project.

Additional finding by Stacey Simon: Lots without a second unit would have a deed restriction. Too much septic would be needed for second units on a half acre. The use would be too intense.

MOTION: Adopt Resolution 06-01, forwarding the associated project clarifications/adjustments to the Mono Supervisors. (Shipley/Miller. Staff is asked to include water resources assessment as a stand-alone item. Ayes: 4. Nay: Bush.)

--- Commissioners Miller and Bush exited the meeting. ---

8. HOUSING ORDINANCE WORKSHOP: Scott Burns, Larry Johnston & Mark Magit

Larry Johnston said the Board of Supervisors is incorporated as the Housing Authority. Lots of data and info have been provided by county counsel, consultant Charlie Long, Andrea Clark of Mammoth Lakes Housing Inc., and the RPACs. The project is 80-90% complete.

A grant-funded consultant found that housing costs exceed what is affordable in all areas. Many pay more than they can afford. Private developable land is scarce near employment centers, and housing costs are driven up by vacation homes and speculation. Half the county housing stock is seasonal and recreational, and employers have difficulty finding employees due to high housing costs. An affordable house price is \$193,486. Rents are somewhat affordable, and rental demand is likely to grow. Few rentals are being built due to low profitability. External market factors include low interest rates, stock market doldrums, IntraWest influence, and "equity escapees" who sell houses as vacation homes. Half of households would like to purchase a home, but can't.

The County is continuing current efforts such as grants, County-owned housing, private development of employee housing, secondary units, and density bonuses. Transient Occupancy Tax could help fund housing. Burns noted that TOT is an enforcement issue with the auditor's office. Magit said there's no way to monitor illegal transient occupancy. Burns indicated that housing stock is there, just not available. A comprehensive Housing Ordinance is needed.

Commissioner Shipley thought too little has been done, too late. Chances of developing big projects are gone. The County should look into tapping the pockets of existing and future residents, such as an assessment of a new buyer on resale. Escapees are selling to second-home owners, so consider an equity-escapee fee. The County should offer benefits to someone adding to the base, not taking away from it. Once sold, condo units are taken off the rental market. Either tap the resource, or lose an extremely large base for development purposes. Encourage secondary units by reducing costs. Developer Bob Stark indicated that a 640-sq. ft. unit would be a 20' x 32' single-wide. It's easier to accommodate the market with a cottage rather than a caboose. He suggested 800 sq. ft. instead.

Commissioner Shipley mentioned the aging community and the difficulty for new people to afford to move in. Land values are so great that developers can't make money on rentals. Commissioner Kattelman predicted the disappearance of existing mobile home parks. Commissioner Shipley suggested County-subsidized mobile home parks with nice-looking small cabins. Stark suggested leasing out management.

Land is the biggest issue for housing. There is no way to build our way out of the problem. What's needed is a creative, edgily legal way to deal with vacation and second homes; e.g., require home occupancy nine mo/yr. Commissioner Shipley noted many people have slipped by already, and not that many more can be tapped. If another year is needed, revenue will be lost.

ADJOURN: 1:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
C.D. Ritter, commission secretary